

Make and Play a Guiro

What is a Guiro?

A guiro, also sometimes called a “fish” is an instrument from Latin American that makes noise when a stick or a rasp is pulled over a series of ridges. Originally, guiros were made from natural objects such as bones or dried gourds that had ridges carved into them with knives. Later they were made from wood and metal as well. To make an easy version of a guiro, all you need are recycled water bottles, materials for decoration and filling and simple scrapers.

Materials Needed

Recycled water bottles with ridges (like Poland Springs) make excellent homemade guiros. You can use sharpies or stickers for decorating the outside and any materials such as beads, seeds, glitter, salt, pebbles or unpopped popcorn for filling up the inside. Use unsharpened pencils, chopsticks and egg whisks or hair picks for your guiro scrapers.

Making Guiros in a Group or a Classroom

Collect bottles with ridges in advance. Take the wrappers off and decorate the outside if you like or leave it clear. It helps to mark each child’s name on the bottom with a permanent marker. Then fill them with something that rattles and add a bit of glitter or confetti for fun, if you like. Put the cap back on your bottles and seal with electrical tape to keeps the contents in. If you like, add colorful ribbons to the top part.

Time to Play!

When you are ready to play, give each child an unsharpened pencil or chop stick to rub on their guiro. Demonstrate the sound that a guiro will make when rubbing it. You can play it along with a simple song like La Cucaracha (The Little Cockroach), a fun song with Spanish and English lyrics.

